

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

March 24, 2009

The Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan and the draft Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Land Use Plan both establish the overarching principles that in the Santa Monica Mountains “the land should dictate the type and intensity of use” and that “resource protection must have priority over development.” Moreover, both plans are accompanied by a series of ordinances in the form of “community standards districts” that help implement their guiding philosophy.

Since 2000, when the North Area Plan was first adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the County has initiated a series of zoning initiatives in an effort to ensure that the principles contained within the plan will be consistently enforced. These initiatives have included a significant reduction in zoning density, prohibitions on ridgeline development, and limits on the amount of grading that can occur without strict environmental review and public oversight. Even these three zoning initiatives have had the profound effect of reducing the scale and improving the sensitivity of proposed developments in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Moreover, in the Coastal Zone, the County has taken additional steps to develop a comprehensive zoning code that is unique to this environmentally sensitive area. Specifically, the draft “Community Standards District for the Santa Monica Mountains

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Coastal Zone” consists of a comprehensive set of legal protections that will, among other protections: reduce night light pollution; prohibit the use of large retaining walls that could otherwise fundamentally alter the character of the mountains; introduce common-sense standards for horse keeping that will protect water quality and habitat while at the same time ensuring that responsible equestrian uses will continue long into the future; protect natural habitat by prohibiting the use of invasive plants; and, implement mandatory emergency preparedness procedures for visitor-serving and commercial uses in the Santa Monica Mountains.

It is time for the County to take the next step toward ensuring that the Santa Monica Mountains North Area also receives the consistently high level of environmental protection that is provided through the creation of a comprehensive Community Standards District.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Acting Director of Regional Planning to report back to the Board of Supervisors with:

- 1) An overall strategy to strengthen the North Area Plan Community Standards District to ensure the preservation of the region’s rural and semi-rural lifestyle, environmental resources, and the public’s continuing investment in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area;
- 2) An analysis of which policies and ordinances should be adapted from the draft Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program into the North Area Plan Community Standards District;
- 3) Recommendations for how provisions of both the North Area Plan and the draft Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone LCP can be further strengthened with an

updated “dark skies” ordinance to protect against light pollution; mandatory rural road standards that prohibit sidewalks, streetlights, curbs and gutters; and a requirement for landform grading techniques to ensure that modified slopes will better fit in with the natural topography;

- 4) A comprehensive review of the North Area Plan trails map and policies to ensure that hiking and equestrian trails are encouraged and protected to the maximum extent allowed by law; and,
- 5) A public outreach strategy to ensure that property owners, the environmental community, architects, equestrians and park agency representatives have the opportunity to participate in the update process.

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